

Designing the process for selecting a site
NWMO Citizens' Panel Dialogues and Public
Discussion Groups

DRAFT

Agenda

- Process overview
 - Objectives of Engagement
 - Methodology
 - Participants
- Key findings
- Cross-cutting themes
 - Informed and willing communities
 - Community well-being
- Guiding principles
- Site selection process



PROCESS OVERVIEW

Objectives of Engagement

1. Obtain **citizens' perspectives** on the proposed site selection process
2. Identify possible ways of **strengthening** the proposed plan with a particular focus on **ensuring that it is fair and appropriate**
3. Identify and advise on any **challenging or potentially problematic implications** related to the selection process

Canadians will have a decision to make:

Where should our used nuclear fuel be contained and isolated for the long term?



Methodology

Citizens' Panel Dialogues

Led by: Ascentum

- Full-day
- Invitation extended to all NWMO citizen panelists
- Learning sessions (APM, guiding principles, siting process)
- Mix of small group and plenary dialogue; participant worksheets
- Q&A with NWMO and CSNC subject-matter experts

Public Discussion Groups

Led by: Navigator

- 3 hour sessions
- Randomly-recruited citizens (14-18 per session)
- Abridged learning session
- Facilitated plenary discussion
- Feedback forms
- Q&A with NWMO subject-matter experts

Analysis

Citizens' Panel Dialogues

Led by: Ascentum

Data sources:

- Guiding Principles
 - Plenary discussion notes
 - Participant summary worksheets
- Site Selection Process
 - Plenary discussion notes
 - Participant post-it notes
- Cross-Cutting Themes
 - Plenary discussion notes
 - Working group notes

Public Discussion Groups

Led by: Navigator

Data sources:

- Guiding Principles
 - Discussion notes
 - Participant worksheets
- Site Selection Process
 - Discussion notes
 - Participant worksheet
- Cross-Cutting Themes
 - Discussion notes
 - Participant post-it notes

Participants

Citizens' Panel Dialogues

- Toronto (Sept. 26/09
English)
 - 63 citizen panelists
 - GTA (32%), the rest of Ontario (28%), NB (14%) and SK (26%)
- Ottawa (Oct.03/09, French)
 - 6 citizen panelists from Province of Quebec

Public Discussion Groups

- Saskatoon (Oct.7/09)
 - 15 participants
- Sault Ste-Marie (Oct.8/09)
 - 16 participants
- Toronto (Oct. 15/09)
 - 18 participants
- Scarborough/Pickering (Oct.17/09)
 - 14 participants
- Saint John (Oct. 19/09)
 - 14 participants



KEY FINDINGS

Key Findings

1. NWMO's Guiding Principles are on track

- Support for the intent and purpose of the guiding principles
- Call for the NWMO to put principles in practice

2. The site selection process meets the test of fairness and safety

- Overall, almost all participants agreed that the proposed nine-step process was both fair and appropriate
- Many questions about the specifics of each step and the process of moving from one step to the next

Key Findings

3. Robust public participation: the heart and soul of a successful site selection process

- Participants stressed the importance of ensuring that *communities be represented by their citizens in an on-going decision-making capacity*
- Guiding principles: ‘shared decision-making’ and ‘inclusiveness’
- Nine steps: in determining whether a community is informed and willing to host the site, in signing a formal agreement with the NWMO, and on an on-going basis once the site is operational

Key Findings

4. The community must benefit from hosting the site and risks must be mitigated

- Overriding concern for participants
- Multifaceted benefits: community and culture; physical and social infrastructure; job opportunities, business incentives; and community capacity-building.
- Expectation that quality of life must not be compromised just for economic gain (“humanist approach”)

Key Findings

5. Need for transparency and third-party involvement

- Transparency of utmost importance
- Recurring call for a neutral third party to ensure fairness and transparency, and help instil public confidence and trust in the process
- Participants' lack of trust in governments to act in the best interest of its citizens, especially in the Public Discussion Groups

6. A “social contract” with future generations

- Concerns about issues of intergenerational equity

7. Research on reducing the volume and toxicity of nuclear waste

- Importance of the project being *adaptive* to new research / technology
- Repeatedly raised issues related to greater use of ‘green’ energy



CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

Informed and Willing Communities

- Core concern for participants across all sessions
- Interwoven in the Guiding Principles and Site Selection Process Discussion
- Many ideas and suggestions for implementation

*How well does the siting process provide for the kinds of **information, tools and resources** that are needed to support the participation of communities that may be interested?*

*What might a community be expected to do to demonstrate **'in a compelling way'** that it is **willing** to become a host site?*



Informed and Educated

- Consistently expressed the view that the public must be ***educated*** about the project
- Feel that the process of informing the public must be well documented and give everyone opportunities to become informed
- Suggested multiple communication techniques, styles and channels to reach a broad and diverse audience

Expert Input and Public Participation

- Valued neutral third-party and expert advice
- Felt that citizens should be given the opportunity to “both receive and contribute information”
- Expressed a strong view that everyone’s voice must be heard – including dissenting voices

Demonstrating Willingness: Voting

- Use of referenda was strongly supported, but views varied on appropriate threshold
- Voter eligibility and turnout also critical considerations
- Underlined the importance of continued public involvement in decision making beyond an initial vote to demonstrate willingness to host the site

Community Well-Being

- Community well-being seen as imperative
- Strong sentiment that the project should promote the socio-economic well-being of the community and contribute to its cultural, economic and infrastructural development

*How well do the **criteria to assess community well-being** capture the key factors that should be considered in deciding whether the project would support or damage a community's well-being?*



Mitigate Risks

- Heavy emphasis on risk mitigation
- Key concerns:
 - Health and safety risks
 - Environmental effects and risks of transportation
 - Unknown long-term effects on health and the environment
 - Negatively impacting relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples
 - Risk of an economic downturn once the “construction boom” ends
 - Compromising quality of life for economic gain

Mitigate Risks (continued)

- Transparency deemed paramount, e.g.:
 - Known and potential risks
 - Worst case scenarios, the strategies to avoid them and emergency plans to deal with adverse incidents
- Frequently mentioned risk-mitigation strategies:
 - Build site close to where most nuclear energy is produced
 - Avoid locating the site near ecologically sensitive areas
 - Continuously monitor and document the surrounding environment, population health, and of general community well-being



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding Principles

- General agreement with the intent and purpose of the proposed guiding principles
- No suggestions for additional or fewer principles
- Suggested refinements/clarifications

*Will the proposed guiding principles help ensure that the siting process is **fair and appropriate**? Why? Why not?*

*What **additions and/or revisions**, if any, should be made? Are there any critical gaps?*



Guiding Principles

Focus on safety

- Unanimously supported, seen as top priority
- Sought details on how safety standards will be maintained and updated on a continuous basis
- Language clarifications:
 - “a very long period of time”;
 - “acknowledge precautions”

“To me, it is the most important thing here; the site chosen must be the safest.”



Guiding Principles

Informed and willing “host community”

- Informed...and also educated
- Questions/concerns re: how to define, measure and demonstrate “willingness”
- Suggestion that measures be taken to ensure that community willingness is independent of vested interests
- Language clarification:
 - Expand upon definition of “host community”

Guiding Principles

Focus on nuclear provinces

- While fair, this should not trump site safety or limit viable site location options
- Participants prioritized minimizing transportation distances over seeking remote/isolated sites
- Other concerns: protecting best interests of vulnerable communities, and maintaining public visibility of the site

"Take into consideration how far away the site will be from the generating plants to minimize hazardous materials on our roads."



Guiding Principles

Right to withdraw

- Want citizens to have a voice in deciding if and how to withdraw
- Support for a withdrawal clause in the formal agreement contingent on new information on safety
- Language clarification:
 - Want to see more imperative language (e.g., “must observe” vs. “take into account”)

“The ultimate objective must always be the protection of the community, and the community must have recourse in the event of undisclosed or new information that changes the situation.”



Guiding Principles

Aboriginal rights, treaties and land claims

- Definitive about not considering any land involved in unresolved legal disputes about Aboriginal rights, treaties or land claims
- Lack of trust in governments treating Aboriginals fairly
- Language clarifications:
 - Strengthen the terms “respect” and “take into account” to be less ambiguous

Guiding Principles

Shared decision making

- Strong support for public participation in decision making
- Not only the “host community” representatives, but every citizen
- Expectation that shared decision-making model would be on-going, throughout the project’s life cycle
- Language clarifications:
 - Participants suggested expanding “host community” to “the citizens of that community” or “the host community and all its citizens”

Guiding Principles

Inclusiveness

- Agreement that neighbouring communities and those on transportation route need to be well-informed, but views diverge on the extent to which they should be involved in decision making.
- Sought more clarity on the decision-making role of provincial/territorial governments
- Language clarifications:
 - Want a more precise definition of the parameters and metrics for “affected” communities and “host community”

“Everyone potentially affected deserves [to have his or her] voice heard.”



Guiding Principles

Informing the process

- Support a third-party review at each step of the site selection process, and want more information on qualifications for third-party review role
- Want to see information more widely available and actively disseminated beyond the NWMO website
- Feel public review and scrutiny are an important component of the review process to uphold transparency
- Value the “adaptive” dimension of the process

“The process needs to be on-going – again responding to new knowledge of the effects of waste management.”



Guiding Principles

Community well-being

- Advocated for the protection of disadvantaged communities (ensure that they are not taken advantage of)
- Concerns relating to residential proximity to the storage site and compensation for related hardships

"How do we insure that we are not taking advantage of poor, disadvantaged communities by offering them economic benefits to take this[...]waste."



Guiding Principles

Regulatory review

- Participants, especially at the Public Discussion Groups, lack a clear understanding of the Canadian nuclear regulatory system
- Value regulatory safeguards and on-going regulatory reviews, by more than one regulating body, plus third-party review
- Desire for regulatory standards to be sufficiently flexible to adapt as scientific research reveals new knowledge and technologies



SITE SELECTION PROCESS

Site Selection Process

- Views of Citizen Panelists and Public Discussion Group participants generally converged
- Overall, almost all participants agreed that the proposed nine-step process for selecting a site was fair and appropriate

*Is this nine-step siting process **fair and appropriate**? Why? Why not?*

*Are there any critical elements and considerations **missing or not adequately addressed**?*

*How might we **strengthen** each of the individual steps and/or the process as a whole to make it as fair and appropriate as possible?*



Step 1 – Initiating the siting process

- Unclear on *how* the NWMO would initiate the process.
 - Idea: issue tenders with a clear checklist to help communities determine their eligibility before expressing interest.
- Suggested creating a short list of communities with the best geographic, geologic and environmental qualities necessary for a suitable host site.
- Inquired about what is envisioned for the “broad program” of “awareness-building” activities

Step 2 – Initial screening

- Agree that an initial screening is essential, but had questions about the details:
 - *How* does the community decide to request a screening?
 - *Who* would make the request on behalf of the community?
 - Would *all* communities expressing interest be granted a screening?
- Value transparency of screening criteria and evaluation results.
- Feel there should be broad-based support to request a screening.

Step 3 – Preliminary assessment

- Similar questions were raised for Step 3 including:
 - How to determine if a community is interested, and should have the preliminary assessment.
 - Whether all interested communities would be evaluated, and if so, concurrently or in prioritized order.
 - Also what would happen if no communities were to be interested, or none passed the pre-screening.
- Concern that the initial screenings and preliminary assessments not be lengthy and costly steps

Step 4 – Detailed site evaluations/ engage surrounding communities

- Support the study of health, safety, environmental, social, economic and cultural effects of the project at a regional level.
- Want a more precise explanation of:
 - what it means for citizens to be “engaged”
 - how engagement would differ between citizens of the host community and those in affected surrounding communities
 - what level of involvement for the surrounding communities would continue throughout the site selection process.
- Believe that the list of communities deemed to have suitable sites (following an evaluation process) must be made public

Step 5 – Decide whether they are willing and negotiate formal agreement

- Want to know what methods communities could use to “decide whether they are willing to accept the project.”
- Feel that consent should be elicited from a pre-determined percentage of the population to demonstrate broad-based support.
- Desire to know if the federal government would be prepared to mandate the site location, and if it would build the site on crown land.

Step 6 – Decide whether they are willing and negotiate formal agreement

- Wonder how the NWMO would select the host community if multiple eligible communities were to be equally suitable and willing.
 - Idea: select the community that has demonstrated the greatest degree of broad-based citizen support for the project.
- Feel that site selection should be done in collaboration with the community.
- Asked about which legal political authority would sign the formal agreement – a provincial or territorial government or municipal council?

Step 7 – Centre of expertise and demonstration facility

- Approve of the plan for a demonstration facility to inform the general public, allowing them to observe and learn firsthand about the project.
- However, some concern about whether this step warrants the associated expense (DF and Centre of Excellence)
- A few questioned whether the existence of a demonstration facility might jeopardize security by advertising the storage operations of hazardous and potentially dangerous materials.

Step 8 – Regulatory review and approval

- Judged to be one of the most important steps in terms of ensuring safety.
- But questions remain: which regulatory authorities would be involved; how will conflicts of interest be avoided?
- Desire to engage regulatory approvals earlier in the process so as to avoid a major roadblock further down the road,
 - e.g. what happens if one in the “series of consecutive licenses” was not granted?
- Want a formal consultation within the regulatory review process with the results reported back to the public and host community.

Step 9 – Construction and operation of the facility

- Participants wanted to know how will the contractor be selected and who will operate the site?
- Raised concerns about:
 - privatizing the facility; project overruns; and need for a third-party overseer to monitor operations.
 - If the site were to close what are potential consequences for the community and the environment?
 - How will the NWMO “continue to work in partnership” with the host community?



CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

- Key common themes and shared values emerged from Citizens' Panel Dialogues and Public Discussion Groups, as well as similar expectations, concerns and suggestions.
- Consensus that the guiding principles for selecting a site, and the site selection process itself, were both fair and appropriate.
- Contributed good ideas on how the process might be refined, clarified and strengthened.

Conclusions

"The risks and benefits of being a host community, and of nuclear energy, must be clearly communicated. We need to talk about this more – it's a big issue!"



"I feel more comfortable now that [the] NWMO is serious about selecting a site in a proper and more human way; that the interest and safety of the people is just as important as selecting and building a site."



"I think you have taken the right approach by involving average people. You show respect for our opinions by using most of our suggestions in developing your literature."

